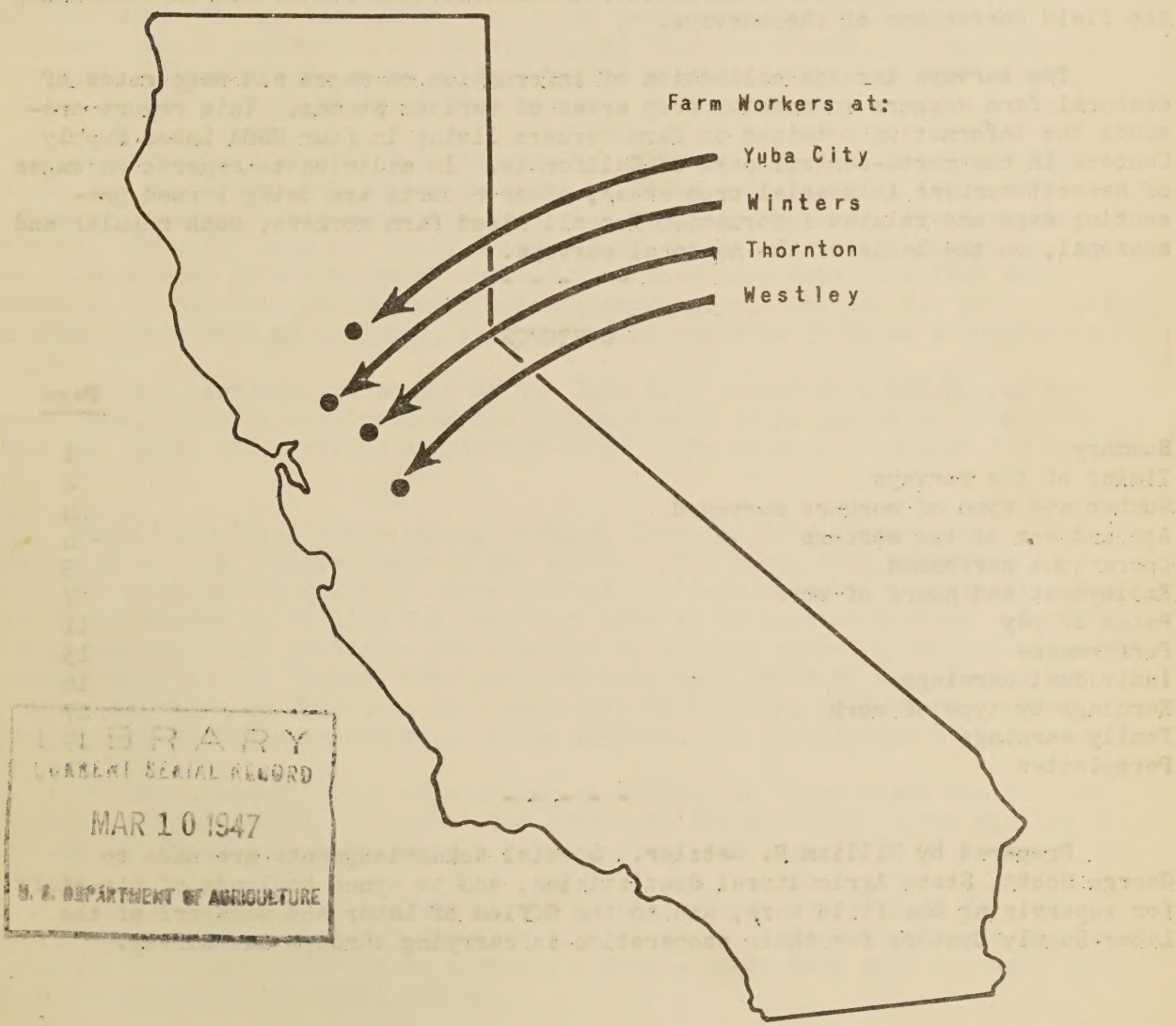


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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Agricultural Economics

WAGES AND WAGE RATES OF SEASONAL FARM WORKERS AT SELECTED
USDA LABOR SUPPLY CENTERS IN NORTH CENTRAL
CALIFORNIA, AUGUST - OCTOBER 1945



Surveys of Wages and Wage Rates in Agriculture, Report Number 9

Washington, D. C.
February 1946

PREFATORY NOTE

This is the ninth of a series of reports being issued by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, presenting results secured from new enumerative sample surveys of farm wages and farm wage rates. The surveys were planned and conducted under the general direction of Conrad Taeuber, Office of the Chief, by a Bureau-wide Committee, with Louis J. Ducoff as Chairman. Members of the Wage Project Committee are as follows: Glen T. Barton, Emerson M. Brooks, Charles F. Cannell, Charles A. Gibbons, Margaret Jarman Hagood, Roger F. Hale, Earl E. Houseman, Barbara B. Reagan. The State Agricultural Statisticians cooperated in conducting the field operations of the surveys.

The surveys include collection of information on wages and wage rates of seasonal farm workers in special crop areas of various States. This report presents the information obtained on farm workers living in four USDA Labor Supply Centers in the north-central part of California. In addition to reports on wages of harvest workers in special crop areas, other reports are being issued presenting wage and related information for all hired farm workers, both regular and seasonal, on the basis of the national surveys.

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CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Summary	1
Timing of the surveys	2
Number and type of workers surveyed	4
Age and sex of the workers	4
Operations performed	5
Employment and hours of work	7
Rates of pay	11
Performance	13
Individual earnings	16
Earnings by type of work	17
Family earnings	19
Perquisites	21

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Prepared by William H. Metzler. Special acknowledgments are made to George Scott, State Agricultural Statistician, and to Wynne Rowlands of his staff for supervising the field work, and to the Office of Labor and managers of the Labor Supply Centers for their cooperation in carrying through the survey.

WAGES AND WAGE RATES OF SEASONAL FARM WORKERS AT
SELECTED USDA LABOR SUPPLY CENTERS IN NORTH
CENTRAL CALIFORNIA, AUGUST-OCTOBER 1945

SUMMARY

During the fall of 1945 surveys of employment and earnings were made at four USDA Labor Supply Centers in north-central California. In these surveys the information secured on time worked and earnings related to all employment, farm and non-farm, secured by the workers during the survey week.

The first survey was made at the Yuba City center at the height of the peach harvest. Though employment was at its peak, work was still somewhat irregular. Peach pickers worked an average of 39 hours a week, 5.2 days of 7.7 hours each. The average length of time worked in other crops was considerably higher. Almond pickers averaged 53 hours work during the week.

Approximately one-third of the workers at this camp were paid on a time basis. The usual rate was either 85 cents or \$1 an hour though a few workers at food-processing plants were paid less than 70 cents an hour. Peach picking was most frequently paid for at 12 cents a box, the ceiling rate, though approximately 20 percent of the workers reported that they were paid more than this amount, as is permitted by the wage ceiling procedures. The pay for prune picking, for which there were no ceilings, ranged from 20 cents to 35 cents a 50-pound box.

Average earnings per worker at the Yuba City center were \$38.20 for the survey week. This figure included the earnings of a large number of women and children. Adult males earned an average of 92 cents an hour or \$42.40 for the week.

Workers at three other camps, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, were surveyed from 5 to 7 weeks later in the season. The early fall rains set in during the week of the first of those surveys and farm work was hampered for the rest of the season by morning dew and other adverse weather conditions. Tomato picking was the chief operation but a number of workers picked grapes or walnuts. Tomato pickers at the Westley camp averaged only 19.5 hours of work during the survey week; those at Thornton, 26.3 hour; and at Winters, 33.6 hours. Other farm workers, with the exception of grape pickers, put in slightly longer hours.

The most common hourly rate of pay of workers in these camps was \$1, and the next most common was 85 cents. The rate most frequently paid for picking tomatoes was 20 cents per 50-pound lug with a range of from 17 to 21 cents.

Average earnings of workers at the Westley center were \$33.30 for the week. This figure, however, included earnings of workers in canning plants and packing-houses who were less affected by weather. Those who did farm work averaged only \$26.30 and the tomato pickers, \$20.20.

Work at the other two camps was not slowed so directly by rain but rather by the morning dews that follow them. Average earnings per worker at the Thornton camp were \$30.30 for the survey week and at Winters, \$35.70.

Average earnings per family unit for the week were \$87 at Yuba City; \$75.50 at Thornton; \$65 at Winters; and \$60.90 at Westley. The difference is not all attributable to the weather. School had started before the last three surveys were made and fewer children were doing farm work.

WAGES AND WAGE RATES OF SEASONAL FARM WORKERS AT
SELECTED USDA LABOR SUPPLY CENTERS IN NORTH
CENTRAL CALIFORNIA, AUGUST-OCTOBER 1945

USDA Labor Supply Centers in north-central California are located conveniently to take care of heavy seasonal labor demands. The centers at Yuba City and Gridley are located in the "Peach Bowl," important production area for canning peaches. They are year-round camps but are especially busy during the peach harvest which comes to a sharp peak during the latter part of August and the first of September. The Winters camp in Yolo County is most active during the apricot season in June and July but also fills up in October with workers who harvest tomatoes, almonds, and walnuts. The camp at Thornton in San Joaquin County is most active from the time of the pea and cherry harvests in May until the end of the grape and tomato harvests in October. The Westley and Ceres camps in Stanislaus County are located in a heavy peach-producing area but a variety of field and truck crops are also grown there. The first is a year-round camp occupied mostly by seasonal workers while the one at Ceres is occupied by resident workers who either have year round employment or change jobs with the seasons.

Timing of the surveys.--Surveys of employment and earnings of the workers in each of four of these camps were made during September and October 1945. At Yuba City, data were obtained from one household in four. Reports were secured from a higher proportion in the other camps as there were fewer families in them. The camps surveyed, date of survey, and size of sample were as follows:

Yuba City, week of August 25 - Sept. 1, 1945 -- 25% sample of households;
Westley, week of October 1 - 8, 1945 -- 35% sample of households;
Thornton, week of October 14 - 20, 1945 -- 40% sample of households;
Winters, week of October 14 - 20, 1945 -- 40% sample of households.

The Yuba City camp also housed 140 Mexican Nationals, but no attempt was made to obtain data from them.

The Yuba City camp is centrally located to supply workers to the important peach-producing locality in Sutter and Yuba Counties. The peach harvest lasts for only a few weeks during the latter part of August and first of September but is the major farm activity in north-central California during that season. It attracts workers from all parts of the Pacific Coast, for earnings ordinarily are good and both men and women are employed.

The survey at the Yuba City center was made at the height of the peach harvest. Field men of the Agricultural Extension Farm Labor Offices estimated that 4,750 workers were employed in this harvest during the week the survey was made (table 1). By the following week employment in this crop had dropped to 4,100 workers and in 2 weeks was down to 800.

The surveys at the other camps were made during the harvest period for grapes, tomatoes, and walnuts (table 2). The work was hampered by fall rains which were somewhat earlier than usual but not entirely unexpected

at this season. According to U. S. Weather Bureau reports, the rain that fell from October 6 to 14 in the various parts of the area served by these camps ranged from 1 to 1½ inches. 1/ The resulting loss in grapes and tomatoes amounted to several millions of dollars. To farm workers it meant intermittent employment. They lost several days work during the rains; thereafter early morning dews prevented them from getting into the fields until 9 or 10 o'clock in the morning, or even later. Grape and tomato pickers were more affected than those who worked in other crops.

Table 1.--Estimated number of seasonal farm workers employed in Sutter and Yuba Counties during weeks ending August 18 and 25 and September 1, 8, and 15, 1945. 1/

Crop	Number of workers employed during week ending:				
	Aug. 18	Aug. 25	Sept. 1 2/	Sept. 8	Sept. 15
<u>Total</u>	3,175	6,140	6,600	6,250	2,950
Peaches	2,075	4,750	4,750	4,100	800
Prunes	-	525	900	1,950	1,950
Hops	750	725	750	-	-
Almonds	140	140	200	200	200
Other	310	-	-	-	-

1/ Data from "California Weekly Farm Labor Reports" published by California Agricultural Extension Service, Farm Labor Project.

2/ Week of survey at Yuba City camp which serves this area.

Table 2.--Estimated number of seasonal farm workers employed in Sacramento, Yolo, Solano, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus Counties during weeks ending September 29, October 6, 13, 20, and 27, 1945. 1/

Crop	Number of workers employed during week ending:					
	Sept. 29	Oct. 6 2/	Oct. 13	Oct. 20 3/	Oct. 27	
<u>Total</u>	37,295	41,945	39,370	37,375	35,410	
Tomatoes	14,600	17,500	16,750	17,050	17,000	
Grapes	7,860	9,760	9,000	8,500	7,300	
Almonds	2,200	1,750	1,850	1,100	800	
Walnuts	1,150	2,500	2,800	2,800	2,600	
Hay	2,020	2,120	1,620	1,000	900	
Sugar beets	2,310	2,460	2,450	2,450	2,450	
Other	7,155	5,855	4,900	4,475	4,360	

1/ Data from "California Weekly Farm Labor Report" published by California Agricultural Extension Service, Farm Labor Project.

2/ Week of survey at Westley Camp.

3/ Week of survey at Thornton and Winters Camps.

1/ U. S. Dept. of Commerce, Weather Bureau, "Weather and crop conditions in California for the month of October, 1945."

Number and type of workers surveyed.--The survey in the Yuba City camp covered 78 family groups, containing 181 farm workers. There were 290 family groups in the camp and a total of 1,525 residents. The average number of workers per family group surveyed was 2.3, and the average size of family groups, 5.3 members. Evidently it was usual for some members of a family group not to do farm work even at the height of the season. No check was made as to the age or sex of non-working members of the family, but probably most of them were children below working age.

The survey at Westley covered 37 family groups and a total of 80 farm workers, an average of 2.2 workers per family. There were 98 families in the camp and a total camp population of 408, or 4.2 members per family.

At the Thornton camp 67 workers were interviewed. They were members of 31 families, an average of 2.2 workers per family.

At Winters 60 workers were covered, an average of 1.8 workers for each of the 33 families surveyed.

The sample was taken so as to obtain a cross-section of all the workers in each camp. Equal proportions were taken from among the more permanent workers who lived in apartments and other year-round housing units, and from among the more transient workers who lived in metal shelters and tents.

Age and sex of the workers.--The number of working males in these camps exceeded the working females by 50 percent. The difference was not so great among the workers in the 18-to-44-year age group as it was among the younger and older workers. In the 18-to-44 group the males exceeded the females by only 25 percent, but the number of boys under 18 exceeded the girls by 116 percent, and the number of men over 45 exceeded the women over that age by 170 percent (table 3). Most field work near these camps is rather heavy for women and only the more able-bodied do it.

Table 3.--Sex and age of workers surveyed in USDA Labor Supply Centers at Yuba City, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, California, Fall, 1945.

Age and sex groups	Number and proportion of workers in each group							
	Yuba City		Westley		Thornton		Winters	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Males								
Total	114	100	45	100	38	100	40	100
Under 18	31	27	8	18	5	13	5	12
18 - 44	59	52	23	51	19	50	26	65
45 - over	24	21	14	31	14	37	9	23
Females								
Total	67	100	35	100	29	100	20	100
Under 18	11	16	4	11	7	24	1	5
18 - 44	45	67	27	77	17	59	16	80
45 - over	11	16	4	11	5	17	3	15

Approximately half the male workers in these camps were in the age group 18-45 while two-thirds of the females were in that group. At the Yuba City camp, male workers ranged in age from 9 years to 68. The range in ages was less marked among women; the youngest was 10 and the oldest, 50. The range in ages at the other camps was similar except that the youngest workers ordinarily were from 12 to 14 years old.

The number of workers under 18 years of age varied somewhat with the type of operations involved. In harvesting such crops as prunes, tomatoes, and almonds, children and youth could work to good advantage whereas they could not in harvesting rice, hay, or grapes, or in tractor operation, trucking, or loading.

Operations performed.--As the survey was made at the Yuba City camp close to the height of the peach harvest, 72 of the 181 workers enumerated at this camp were picking peaches while 35 others were employed at loading or hauling peaches, or were working in the canning plant (table 4). Some large families with a number of small children were picking prunes as this work can be done by children who cannot handle the ladders used in picking peaches.

Table 4.--Operations performed during survey week by workers surveyed in USDA Labor Supply Centers at Yuba City, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, California, Fall 1945. 1/

		: Number of workers performing each operation:				
Camp and operation	Total	: Sex :		: Age :		
		: Male :	: Female :	: Under 18 :	: 18-44 :	: 45-over
<u>Yuba City</u>						
All operations	181	114	67	42	105	34
Peach picking	72	49	23	10	49	13
Prune picking	45	27	18	19	18	8
Almond picking	11	8	3	2	8	1
Other farm operations	17	11	6	7	8	2
Processing	33	19	14	4	20	9
Non-agricul-tural	3	-	3	-	2	1

Westley

All operations	80	45	35	12	52	16	
Tomato picking	39	23	16	11	16	12	
Walnut picking	5	4	1	-	4	1	
Tractor, truck driving and loading	4	4	-	-	4	-	
Other farm operations	6	6	-	-	6	-	
Processing	21	8	13	1	17	3	
Non-agricultural	5	-	5	-	5	-	

- continued -

Table 4.--Operations performed during survey week by workers surveyed in USDA Labor Supply Centers at Yuba City, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, California, Fall 1945, continued.

		: Number of workers performing each operation:				
Camp and operation	Total	Sex		Age		
		: Male	: Female	: Under 18	: 18-44	: 45-over
<u>Thornton</u>						
All operations	77	45	32	15	39	23
Tomatoes	39	20	19	8	23	8
Grapes	24	15	9	5	9	10
Truck driving	6	6	-	1	4	1
Processing	6	3	3	1	3	2
Non-agricultural	2	1	1	-	-	2

Winters

All operations	64	42	22	6	46	12
Tomato picking	17	9	8	3	13	1
Walnut harvest	13	8	5	1	8	4
Almond harvest	5	3	2	-	2	3
Tractor driving	7	7	-	2	5	-
Other farm operations	12	9	3	-	12	-
Processing	7	3	4	-	5	2
Non-agricultural	3	3	-	-	1	2

1/ Totals for operations are sometimes larger than the total number of workers in a camp since some workers engaged in more than one operation during the survey week.

Tomato picking was the type of work most commonly done at the other three camps and was reported by approximately half of the workers. Next most common was grape picking at the Thornton camp. Unfortunately, too few of the camp residents were doing this work to provide adequate data on wages, hours, and earnings. Some workers in all camps were picking walnuts or almonds, but the number was not large.

Off-farm employment was rather common among the workers, particularly at Yuba City and Westley. Thirty-six of the workers surveyed at Yuba City, 26 at Westley, 8 at Thornton, and 9 at Winters were doing such work. All but three of these workers at Yuba City were employed by canning plants or packing-houses and all but 5 at Westley. The remainder worked in stores, did paid housework, or other non-agricultural work.

The classification used for grouping the types of work reported by the workers surveyed was as follows:

Farm operations - all field operations and trucking operations when the employer is a farmer and not a processor;

Processing - all operations at dehydrators, hop sheds, canning plants, frozen food plants, and packing houses, whether on a farm or in town;

Nonagricultural - nonfarm jobs in stores, offices, and in such types of work as painting and housecleaning.

Employment and hours of work.--According to reports of the Farm Labor Office of the Agricultural Extension Service, the peach harvest in the Yuba City area was 75 percent complete at the time of the survey; the hop harvest had arrived at approximately the same stage; the almond harvest was 40 percent complete; and prune, 25 percent. Employment in all these crops, therefore, should have been close to its peak at the time of the survey. It might be expected that workers then would be employed 6 or 7 days a week and for long hours each day. Peach and prune pickers, however, were working an average of 5.2 and 5.0 days per week respectively, while almond and walnut pickers were working 6.1 days (table 5). Total hours of work per week showed similar characteristics, 39 hours for peach pickers, 44 for prune pickers, and 53 for those working in almonds. Actually, peaches must be harvested within a few days after they reach the proper stage of maturity for canning, whereas the picking of prunes can be delayed without loss of fruit, and the timing of the harvest of almonds and walnuts can be even less precise.

Table 5.--Average time worked by workers in USDA Labor Supply Centers at Yuba City, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, California, during survey week, Fall 1945. 1/

Camp and operation	Hours per day			:	Days per week		
	All workers	Male	Female		All workers	Male	Female
All camps	8.0	8.3	7.6	:	4.7	4.7	4.7
<u>Yuba City</u>				:			
All operations	8.3	8.5	8.1	:	5.3	5.3	5.2
Peach picking	7.7	7.8	7.5	:	5.2	5.1	5.2
Prune picking	8.8	8.9	8.7	:	5.0	5.0	5.1
Other farm operations	7.9	8.2	7.5	:	5.6	5.6	5.8
Processing	9.5	9.7	9.2	:	5.5	5.8	4.9
<u>Westley</u>				:			
All operations	7.6	8.2	6.9	:	4.3	3.9	4.7
Tomato picking	5.8	6.5	5.0	:	3.5	3.3	3.8
Other farm operations	9.8	9.8	-	:	4.0	4.0	-
Processing	8.5	-	8.0	:	5.7	-	6.0
<u>Thornton</u>				:			
All operations	7.1	7.5	6.6	:	4.1	4.4	3.7
Tomatoes	7.3	7.5	7.0	:	4.1	4.2	4.0
Grapes	6.3	6.3	6.2	:	3.8	4.0	3.6

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Table 5.--Average time worked by workers in USDA Labor Supply Centers at Yuba City, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, California, during survey week, Fall 1945, continued. 1/

Camp and operation	Hours per day			:	Days per week		
	All workers	Male	Female		All workers	Male	Female
<hr/>							
<u>Winters</u>				:			
				:			
All operations	8.1	8.3	7.7	:	4.4	4.5	4.3
				:			
Tomato picking	8.1	-	-	:	4.0	-	-
Walnut harvest	7.1	-	-	:	4.0	-	-
Other farm operations	8.4	-	-	:	4.5	-	-
				:			

1/ Averages for all operations in which fewer than 10 people were engaged have been omitted.

Irregularity of employment of peach pickers even at the rush season may have been associated with the inability of the peach canners to handle all the fruit brought to them. This situation has developed during rush periods for the last several years. To meet it, canners place the growers on a quota basis, and if a grower fills his quota too rapidly he has to lay off his workers until the beginning of the next quota period. No such quotas exist in the more leisurely harvests of prunes, almonds, and walnuts.

The touch of late season weather and irregular employment were beginning to be felt at the other camps when the surveys were made. In fact, at the Thornton and Winters camps many workers had already left and others were working rather irregularly. Three workers at the Westley camp reported that they had had no employment during the week.

Reports of the Farm Labor Offices of the Agricultural Extension Service indicate that the harvest of grape and tomato crops was only two-thirds complete at the time of the surveys. Yet adverse weather conditions had pretty well disrupted the harvest employment situation and growers were concerned as to how much of the balance of these crops they would be able to salvage. Though the usual farm work week in California is either $5\frac{1}{2}$ or 6 days, tomato pickers at the Westley camp averaged only 3.5 days of work during the survey week; those at Thornton, 4.1; and those at Winters, 4.0. The average for all workers at these camps was only slightly higher: 4.3 days at Westley; 3.5 at Thornton; and 4.4 days at Winters.

At the Westley camp 50 percent of the male workers were employed for 3 days or less during the survey week, and 75 percent were employed for 4 days or less (table 6). Employment of women at this camp was somewhat more regular than for the men largely because a higher proportion of them were working at canning plants and packinghouses.

Employment at the other two camps was much more regular. Only one in five of the male workers was employed for 3 days or less and one in three of the women. Evidently the rain had not interfered with their work as much as at Westley.

Table 6.--Days and hours worked during the survey week by workers at USDA Labor Supply Centers at Yuba City, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, California, Fall 1945.

Time worked during week	Number and proportion of workers:							
	Yuba City		Westley		Thornton		Winters	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<u>Males</u>								
<u>Days</u>								
Total	115	100	45	100	37 1/2	100	37 1/2	100
Under 3	3	3	2	4	1	3	1	3
3	6	5	21	47	7	19	7	19
3 1/2	-	-	-	-	3	8	1	3
4	12	10	11	25	5	13	4	11
4 1/2	4	4	-	-	3	8	4	11
5	21	18	2	4	12	33	6	16
5 1/2	5	4	2	4	2	5	-	-
6	49	43	7	16	3	8	13	35
6 1/2	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-
7	15	13	-	-	-	-	1	3
<u>Hours</u>								
Total	115	100	42 1/2	100	35 1/2	100	39 1/2	100
Under 20	6	5	14	33	4	11	1	3
20.0-29.9	11	10	5	12	6	17	7	18
30.0-39.9	22	19	7	17	11	31	14	36
40.0-49.9	29	25	11	26	11	31	8	20
50.0-59.9	24	21	4	10	1	3	5	13
60.0-over	23	20	1	2	2	6	4	10
<u>Females</u>								
<u>Days</u>								
Total	67	100	30 1/2	100	28 1/2	100	20	100
Under 3	3	4	1	3	1	3	2	10
3	3	5	8	27	11	39	5	25
3 1/2	2	3	-	-	4	14	-	-
4	5	7	3	10	3	11	1	5
4 1/2	3	5	-	-	1	4	1	5
5	13	19	4	13	5	18	5	25
5 1/2	3	5	-	-	2	7	-	-
6	26	36	14	47	1	4	5	25
6 1/2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	11	16	-	-	-	-	1	5

- continued -

Table 6.--Days and hours worked during the survey week by workers at USDA Labor Supply Centers at Yuba City, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, California, Fall 1945, continued:

Time worked during week	Number and proportion of workers:							
	Yuba City		Westley		Thornton		Winters	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<u>Females</u>								
<u>Hours</u>								
<u>Total</u>	67	100	30 <u>1/</u>	100	25 <u>1/</u>	100	20	100
Under 20	3	5	8	27	8	32	3	15
20.0-29.9	12	18	2	7	6	24	4	20
30.0-39.9	9	13	2	7	6	24	3	15
40.0-49.9	18	27	13	43	4	16	8	40
50.0-59.9	17	25	5	16	-	-	1	5
60.0-over	8	12	0	-	1	4	1	5

1/ Some workers did not report hours or days of work so totals are less than those given in Table 3.

Lateness of the season affected the employment situation in yet another way. Of the workers surveyed almost 20 percent were employed in canning plants, packinghouses, or other nonfarm jobs. Either they had already shifted to indoor types of work, or they had remained in camp after the field workers had left because their nonfarm jobs were of a more permanent nature.

The largest proportion of the workers were employed on only one farm during the survey week (table 7). In fact, only one worker at the Westley camp reported working on more than one farm during this time. Workers at the Thornton camp came nearest to being an exception: 28 worked on only one farm, 16 on two, and 15 on three farms during the week.

Table 7.--Number of farms worked on during survey week by workers in USDA Labor Supply Centers at Yuba City, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, California, Fall 1945.

Farms worked on during week	Number and proportion of workers:							
	Yuba City		Westley		Thornton		Winters	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<u>Workers reporting</u>								
	133 <u>1/</u>	100	54 <u>1/</u>	100	59 <u>1/</u>	100	50 <u>1/</u>	100
One	107	80	53	98	28	48	44	88
Two	13	10	-	-	16	27	5	10
Three	13	10	1	2	15	25	1	2

1/ Includes those working on farms only.

Rates of pay.--Rates of pay of farm workers in this area are either covered by the WFA general wage regulation or by specific wage-ceiling orders. The maximum rate of pay permitted by the general wage regulation is 85 cents an hour except to workers who were being paid more than that before December 1943. Such workers -- or their successors in the same job or line of work -- can still be paid at the 1943 rate. This is frequently \$1 an hour in rice, hay, grain, and other heavy types of labor.

Specific wage ceilings were established in this area for a number of operations including the following which were being carried on at the time of the survey: peach picking, 12 cents per box; tomato picking, 17 cents per box for round tomatoes, and 21 cents for pear-shaped tomatoes. The figures reported by the workers in Table 9 indicate that the ceiling rates had actually become base rates and that piece rates ran from the ceiling rate upward. These wage schedules resulted from the tight labor situation that prevailed in the area during the 1945 and prior seasons. Growers with the best orchards and fields, who would ordinarily be expected to hire labor for less than ceiling rates, paid the full ceiling rate, and other growers had to obtain permission to pay a higher rate in order to get workers to handle their crops.

The area served by these farm labor camps is one of the areas with the highest agricultural wage rate in the State. Three factors contribute to this situation: (1) it is near the high-wage San Francisco Bay area shipyards and defense plants; (2) it is distant from Southern California and Mexico which serve as reservoirs of farm labor for the State; and (3) the harvest seasons are comparatively short, so premium wages must be paid to attract workers. The most common hourly rates received by those living in the camps were either 85 cents or \$1, with some workers receiving as much as \$1.25 (table 8). Field workers had somewhat higher rates of pay than those who worked in canning plants, packinghouses, and other food-processing plants. Those working in these places generally earned 85 cents an hour or less.

Table 8.--Number and proportion of workers in USDA Labor Supply Centers at Yuba City, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, California, who were paid hourly rates of specified amounts, by operation, survey week, Fall 1945.

Camp and operation	Number of workers with hourly rates of:									
	Total	\$.70 or less	.75	.80	.85	.90	.95	1.00	1.05	1.25
<u>Yuba City</u>										
Total	62	6	3	8	23	5	1	16	-	-
Percent receiving each rate	100	9	5	13	37	8	2	26	-	-
Knocking almonds	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	-
Hoeing beans	11	-	-	6	5	-	-	-	-	-
Load, haul, etc.	6	-	-	-	3	-	-	3	-	-
Other farm work	4	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-
Processing	33	6	3	2	13	3	1	5	-	-

Table 8.--Number and proportion of workers in USDA Labor Supply Centers at Yuba City, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, California, who were paid hourly rates of specified amounts, by operation, survey week, Fall 1945, continued.

Camp and operation	Number of workers with hourly rates of:									
	Total	\$.70 or less	.75	.80	.85	.90	.95	1.00	1.15	1.25
<u>Westley</u>										
Total	39	-	-	-	13	-	3	13	1	9
Percent receiving each rate	100	-	-	-	33	-	8	33	3	23
Gathering walnuts	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	1
Truck and tractor operation	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	1
Other farm	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	6
Processing	21	-	-	-	13	-	3	4	-	1
<u>Thornton</u>										
Total	11	-	-	-	2	4	1	4	-	-
Percent receiving each rate	100	-	-	-	18	36	9	36	-	-
Driving truck	5	-	-	-	-	1	-	4	-	-
Processing	6	-	-	-	2	3	1	-	-	-
<u>Winters</u>										
Total	20	-	2	1	4	2	1	9	1	-
Percent receiving each rate	100	-	10	5	20	10	5	45	5	-
Picking walnuts	5	-	-	-	2	-	-	3	-	-
Driving tractor	4	-	-	-	1	-	-	3	-	-
Other farm work	5	-	1	1	1	-	-	2	-	-
Processing onions	6	-	1	-	-	2	1	1	1	-

Several comparatively low rates of pay were reported at the Yuba City camp. One young worker reported receiving 65 cents an hour and two others 67½ cents; they worked in the local food-processing plants. Over three-fourths of the peach pickers reported that they were paid the ceiling rate of 12 cents a box (table 9); the rest were paid rates up to 18 cents. Rates per box for picking tomatoes ranged less widely from the wage-ceiling figures of 17 and 21 cents.

Operations on which no wage ceilings existed showed a still wider range of pay rates. Prune pickers were paid from 20 to 35 cents a box, grape pickers from 12 cents to 25 cents, and almond pickers either 3½ or 5½ cents a pound.

Table 9.--Piece rates reported by workers in USDA Labor Supply Centers at Yuba City, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, California, during survey week, Fall 1945.

Operation	Rate	Unit	Number workers reporting each rate:				Percent at each rate
			Yuba City	Westley	Thornton	Winters	
Total			67				100
Peach picking	\$0.12	Box	1/ 53	-	-	-	79
" "	.13	"	1	-	-	-	1
" "	.14	"	1	-	-	-	1
" "	.15	"	4	-	-	-	6
" "	.16	"	4	-	-	-	6
" "	.17	"	2	-	-	-	3
" "	.18	"	2	-	-	-	3
Total			39				100
Prune picking	\$0.20	Box	2	-	-	-	5
" "	.22	"	2	-	-	-	5
" "	.25	"	10	-	-	-	25
" "	.30	"	24	-	-	-	62
" "	.35	"	1	-	-	-	3
Total			-	39	37	20	100
Tomato picking	\$0.17	Box	1/ -	10	5	9	25
" "	.18	"	-	16	3	0	20
" "	.19	"	-	3	0	0	3
" "	.20	"	-	10	20	11	43
" "	.21	"	1/ -	-	9	-	9
Total			-	-	24	-	100
Grape picking	\$ 0.12	Box	-	-	4	-	17
" "	.14	"	-	-	-	-	17
" "	.15	"	-	-	10	-	42
" "	.17	"	-	-	2	-	8
" "	10.00	Ton	-	-	4	-	17

1/ Ceiling rates are underscored. Ceiling rates on picking tomatoes were 17 cents for round varieties and 21 cents for the pear shaped. Reports did not indicate which type the workers were picking.

Performance.--Figures on output per worker were calculated in two ways: (1) by age and sex of worker (table 10) and (2) by the piece rate paid (table 11). The former gives some evidence as to the performance for the operation itself and the relative output of women and children as compared with adult male workers. The latter serves as a check on the wage-adjustment process under the wage-ceiling program. Under this program growers who had lighter yields, or smaller or more defective fruit, or higher trees, or other conditions that reduce the output per worker are granted permission to pay a specific rate higher than the regular ceiling. If these adjustments are granted fairly and accurately, a worker

should be able to earn the same amount in an "adjusted field" as in one that is paying the ceiling rate.

As to performance on the basis of age and sex, it is interesting to learn how frequently women equaled or outperformed the men. In picking peaches this is readily understood as the women frequently pick the lower limbs of a tree, either from the ground or by using a short ladder, while the men are using longer ladders to pick from the top of the tree. But in other operations this advantage does not exist. Yet we find women earning just as much money at picking prunes as the men, and the differential in picking grapes and tomatoes is not large.

Table 10.--Performance and earnings of workers employed at piece rates at USDA Labor Supply Centers at Yuba City, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, California, during survey week, September-October, 1945.

Operation and unit	Number workers reporting 1/	Units handled		Average earnings	
		Per hour	Per day	Per hour	Per day
<u>Peach picking (boxes)</u>					
All workers	69	7.5	56.9	\$.97	\$7.30
Males - all ages	46	7.4	56.8	.96	7.30
18 - 44	29	7.7	59.0	.98	7.50
Females - all ages	23	7.7	57.0	.99	7.40
18 - 44	19	7.8	57.5	1.00	7.40
<u>Prune picking (boxes)</u>					
All workers	39	2.4	19.7	.65	5.40
Males - all ages	23	2.1	18.0	.59	5.00
Under 18	12	1.7	14.9	.49	4.20
18-45 and over	11	2.6	21.5	.71	5.90
Females - all ages	16	2.7	22.2	.73	6.00
18-45 and over	11	2.7	22.6	.86	6.20
<u>Tomato picking (boxes)</u>					
All workers	84	5.0	38.2	.96	7.30
Males - all ages	48	5.2	38.9	.98	7.40
Under 18	13	4.0	27.7	.77	5.30
18 - 44	21	5.6	42.8	1.07	8.20
45 and over	14	5.4	43.0	1.01	8.10

- continued -

Table 10.--Performance and earnings of workers employed at piece rates at USDA Labor Supply Centers at Yuba City, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, California, during survey week, September-October, 1945, continued.

Operation and unit	Number workers reporting 1/	Units handled		Average earnings	
		Per hour	Per day	Per hour	Per day
Tomato picking (boxes)					
Females - all ages	36	4.8	34.4	.92	6.60
18 - 44	24	4.9	35.9	.94	6.90
Picking grapes (box)					
	17	1.0	6.5	1.35	8.50

1/ No data given as to whether tomatoes were round or pear-shaped.

The number picking peaches at adjusted rates was too small to provide a real basis for a decision as to the adequacy of the adjustment process. The earnings of workers paid adjusted rates, however, were approximately the same as those of pickers working at the ceiling rate. The former earned 93 cents an hour and the latter 97. If no adjustments had been permitted, the earnings of the former group would only have been 71 cents, provided the grower could have kept them on the job.

Earnings at tomato picking were rather uniform in spite of the differences in rate.

Table 11.--Performance and earnings of workers employed at piece rates according to rate paid per unit, USDA Labor Supply Centers at Yuba City, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, California, during survey, Fall 1945.

Operation and rate	Number workers reporting 1/	Units handled	Average earnings		
		Per hour	Per day	Per hour	Per day
<u>Peach picking</u>					
All workers	67	7.5	56.9	.97	7.30
\$.12 per box	53	8.1	60.1	.97	7.20
.13 - .18 box	14	5.9	47.7	.93	7.60
<u>Prune picking</u>					
All workers	35	2.4	19.7	.65	5.40
\$.25 per box	10	2.7	25.5	.65	6.10
.30 per box	24	2.0	16.8	.61	5.10
<u>Tomato picking</u>					
All workers	96	5.0	36.3	.96	6.90
\$.17 per box	24	5.5	40.6	.93	6.90
.18 per box	19	5.4	33.3	.97	6.00
- continued -					

- continued -

Table 11.--Performance and earnings of workers employed at piece rates according to rate paid per unit, USDA Labor Supply Centers at Yuba City, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, California, during survey, Fall 1945, continued.

Operation and rate	Number workers reporting 1/	Units handled		Average earnings	
		Per hour	Per day	Per hour	Per day
<u>Tomato picking - cont'd</u>					
\$.20 per box	41	5.0	37.2	.99	7.40
.21 per box	9	4.1	33.3	.87	7.00
<u>Grape picking</u>					
All workers	24	9.0	59.7	1.28	8.50

1/ Includes only those workers who reported rates of payment, units handled, hours and earnings.

Individual earnings.--Average earnings per worker at the Yuba City camp were 87 cents an hour and \$7.30 a day. Total earnings for the week averaged \$38.20. Earnings were affected to some extent by the fact that 42 of the workers were under 18 years of age. These workers earned an average of \$29.60 (table 12). Adult male workers 18 - 44 years old averaged 92 cents an hour, \$7.70 a day, and \$42.40 for the week.

Adult females did almost as well except that they worked fewer hours. They made 88 cents an hour, \$7 a day, and \$37.90 for the week.

Average weekly earnings at the Westley camp were somewhat lower than at Yuba City because of the lateness of the season, though higher than weekly earnings at the other two camps because of the large degree of employment at canning plants and packinghouses. The average was 97 cents per hour, \$7.40 per day, and \$31.70 for the week. None of the women at this camp earned more than \$50 a week, whereas 20 percent of those at Yuba City had done so. Only 18 percent of the men earned more than this amount, compared with 32 percent at Yuba City (table 13). Yet average hourly earnings of workers at Westley were 10 cents an hour higher than at Yuba City.

Hourly earnings of the workers at the Thornton camp were particularly high, \$1.22 per hour. This was partially because of high earnings for picking grapes which paid an average of \$1.35 per hour. Earnings for the week at this camp however, were only \$30.30. Males earned an average of \$1.29 an hour and the females \$1.10. The weekly earnings showed the result of longer hours of work on the part of the men; they earned \$42.40 as compared with \$27.00 for the women.

Farm work at Winters was less severely affected by the weather and the workers earned an average of \$35.70 for the week. Average earnings of workers in this camp were reduced somewhat by the fact that some of the workers were school children who only worked after school hours. Average earnings of workers under 18 years of age in this camp were only 47 cents whereas they were but little less than the adult rate at all the other camps.

Table 12.--Average earnings of workers in USDA Labor Supply Centers at Yuba City, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, California, during survey week, Fall 1945.

Camp and operation	Earnings per hour			Earnings per day			Earnings per week		
	All workers			All workers			All workers		
	Male	Female		Male	Female		Male	Female	
	Dollars			Dollars			Dollars		
All camps	.95	.99	.90	7.60	8.20	6.80	34.90	38.60	31.80
Yuba City									
Total	.87	.88	.86	7.30	7.50	6.90	38.20	39.50	35.90
Peach picking	.98	.96	1.01	7.50	7.50	7.50	38.70	38.50	39.10
Prune picking	.73	.69	.79	6.40	6.20	6.90	32.20	30.50	35.10
Other farm operations	.86	.91	.77	6.80	7.40	5.80	38.30	41.20	33.40
Processing	.85	.90	.77	8.10	8.70	7.10	44.00	50.70	34.90
Westley									
Total	.97	1.04	.89	7.30	8.60	6.00	31.70	33.30	29.50
Tomato picking	.99	.99	.99	5.80	6.40	4.90	20.20	21.50	18.40
Other farm operations	1.10	1.10	-	10.50	10.60	-	42.10	42.20	-
Processing	.92	-	.84	7.80	-	6.70	44.60	-	40.30
Thornton									
Total	1.20	1.30	1.10	8.70	9.50	7.30	35.40	42.10	26.00
Tomato picking	1.08	1.10	1.06	7.90	8.30	7.40	31.90	34.60	29.40
Grape picking	1.35	1.40	1.27	8.50	8.90	7.90	32.30	35.50	28.10
Winters									
Total	.99	1.05	.88	8.10	8.70	6.80	35.70	39.10	29.20
Tomato picking	.90	-	-	7.30	-	-	28.80	-	-
Walnut picking	.89	-	-	6.40	-	-	25.40	-	-
Other farm operations	1.07	-	-	8.90	-	-	40.50	-	-

Earnings by type of work.--Earnings of prune pickers were the lowest of any group in the survey. They earned an average of 73 cents an hour and \$6.40 a day. Their week's work netted them an average of \$32.20. These lower earnings are in part due to the many boys and girls hired for this work. Adult men, however, made only 80 cents an hour at prune picking and adult women 85 cents. On the other hand, adult peach pickers earned close to \$1 an hour. It

is to be remembered that prune picking is usually done by workers who have large families of children who are too young to pick peaches. The family members, by their combined efforts, can often make more in prune picking than if only the adults engaged in peach picking.

Peach pickers earned an average of 98 cents an hour, \$7.50 a day, and \$38.70 for the week. The loaders, haulers, and truckers, had approximately the same hourly earnings, averaging \$1 an hour.

Grape pickers had the highest hourly earnings, \$1.35, but their work was so irregular that their total weekly pay envelope had only \$32.20 or approximately the same amount as earned by the prune pickers.

Tomato pickers at the three camps earned an average of \$1.01 an hour, ranging from 90 cents at Winters to \$1.08 at Thornton. Daily earnings, however, were only \$6.90, and weekly earnings \$26.50.

Workers in processing plants did not do so well on an hourly basis as the workers in the fields. Their earnings averaged from 85 cents an hour at Yuba City to 94 cents at Winters. On the basis of total earnings for the week, however, they were from 20 to 50 percent better off than the field workers. On the other hand their wages were subject to deductions for Social Security and withholding tax, so their "take home" pay was about the same as that of the field worker. Their average earnings ranged from \$44 at Yuba City to \$47.50 at Winters while field workers were averaging from \$26 to \$38.

Too few of the camp workers were engaged in entirely nonagricultural operations to justify making any comparisons.

Table 13.--Amounts earned during survey week by workers in USDA Labor Supply Centers at Yuba City, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, California, Fall 1945.

Group and earnings	Number and proportion of workers earning specified amounts:							
	Yuba City		Westley		Thornton		Winters	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion

Males

Weekly

<u>Total</u>	114	100	45	100	38	100	40	100
Under \$20	20	17	15	33	7	18	5	12
\$20 - 29	11	10	4	9	8	21	6	15
30 - 39	28	24	11	24	7	18	8	20
40 - 49	19	17	7	16	7	18	11	28
50 - 59	17	15	6	13	3	8	5	12
60 - over	19	17	2	5	6	16	5	12

- continued -

Table 13.--Amounts earned during survey week by workers in USDA Labor Supply Centers at Yuba City, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, California, Fall 1945, cont'd.

Group and earnings	Number and proportion of workers earnings specified amounts:							
	Yuba City		Westley		Thornton		Winters	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion

Males

Daily

Total	114	100	45	100	38	100	37 1/2	100
Under \$4.00	14	13	1	2	-	-	3	8
\$4.00-4.99	6	6	8	18	2	5	-	-
5.00-5.99	16	15	4	9	1	3	1	3
6.00-6.99	16	15	4	9	12	32	4	11
7.00-7.99	14	13	2	4	2	5	11	30
8.00-8.99	17	16	5	11	7	18	6	16
9.00-over	24	22	21	47	14	37	12	32

Females

Weekly

Total	67	100	35	100	28	100	20	100
Under \$20	9	13	14	40	10	36	4	20
\$20 - 29	9	13	3	9	6	21	7	35
30 - 39	24	36	8	23	6	21	2	10
40 - 49	14	18	10	28	6	21	4	20
50 - 59	8	12	-	-	-	-	3	15
60 - over	5	8	-	-	-	-	-	-

Daily

Total	66 1/2	100	30 1/2	100	28	100	20	100
Under \$4.00	6	9	4	13	-	-	3	15
\$4.00-4.99	5	8	8	27	1	4	1	5
5.00-5.99	8	12	6	20	1	4	1	5
6.00-6.99	17	26	5	17	14	50	5	25
7.00-7.99	12	18	4	13	2	7	3	15
8.00-8.99	9	14	2	7	4	14	4	20
9.00-over	9	14	1	3	6	21	3	15

1/ Data on daily earnings not given for some workers.

Family earnings.--Family earnings at the Yuba City camp were considerably higher than at the other three. The families there earned an average of \$87 for the survey week while those at Thornton averaged \$75.50, at Winters \$65, and at Westley \$60.80 (table 14). At least two factors influenced this fact: the Yuba City survey was made earlier in the season when the workers could put in more time per week and it was made before school opened and there were more families who had five or six workers adding to the family income at the same time.

Each of two families at the Yuba City camp had six workers and four others there had 5 workers. No family at the other camps had six workers and Westley was the only other camp with families of five workers. Three such families were surveyed there. At the Yuba City, Thornton, and Winters camps the most usual number of workers per family unit was two. At Westley it was only one. Differences in total earnings of the family were not as great as differences in number of workers per family unit. Additional workers per family unit generally contributed less and less to the family income.

Table 14.--Average earnings per family during survey week by number of workers in family, USDA Labor Supply Centers at Yuba City, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, California, September - October, 1945.

		Yuba City		Westley		Thornton		Winters	
Number		Average		Average		Average		Average	
workers in	Number	weekly	Number	weekly	Number	weekly	Number	weekly	
family	families	earnings	families	earnings	families	earnings	families	earnings	
Families reporting	78	\$ 87.00	37	\$60.90	31	\$ 75.50	32	\$ 65.00	
1	20	50.60	16	43.40	10	60.20	10 ^{1/}	40.10	
2	32	87.90	12	76.00	10 ^{2/}	72.10	18	65.10	
3	15	97.10	4	84.90	5	73.20	3	146.90	
4	5	141.40	2	57.30	5	115.30	1	67.00	
5	4	141.50	3	63.50	-	-	-	-	
6	2	111.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	

1/ There were 11 families at Winters with one worker each. Wages for one were not recorded.

2/ One family's earnings not reported. Average on basis 10 families whose earnings were reported.

Families with only one worker had average earnings of only \$40.10 at Winters as compared to \$60.15 at Thornton during the same week. Three families with three workers each at Winters earned an average of \$146.90, which was more than the average earnings of any of the families at Yuba City having four, five, or six workers.

On the basis of percentage of families who made given amounts, the disparity between earnings at Yuba City and the other camps is apparent. Only 6 percent of the families at Yuba City had earnings of less than \$40 while 20 percent of the families at the other camps had earnings of less than that amount (table 15). At the other extreme, 22 percent of the Yuba City families had total earnings for the week in excess of \$120 as compared with only 6 percent at the other camps.

Table 15.--Amounts earned by families during survey week, by number of workers in family, USDA Labor Supply Centers at Yuba City, Westley, Thornton, and Winters, California, Fall 1945.

Number		Number families with weekly earnings:					
workers in	All	Under	\$40.00-	\$60.00-	\$80.00-	\$100.00	\$120.00
family	families	\$40.00	59.00	79.00	99.00	-119.00	and over
<u>Yuba City</u>							
Total	78	5	15	16	14	11	17
Percent	100	6	19	21	18	14	22
1	20	3	9	7	1	-	-
2	32	1	2	9	8	8	4
3	15	1	3	-	5	2	4
4	5	-	1	-	-	-	4
5	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
6	2	-	-	-	-	1	1
<u>Westley, Thornton, Winters</u> 1/							
Total	99	19	31	17	15	11	6
Percent	100	20	31	17	15	11	6
1	36	11	19	3	3	-	-
2	40	7	8	7	10	6	2
3	12	1	1	3	1	4	2
4	8	-	2	2	1	1	2
5	3	-	1	2	-	-	-
<u>All camps</u> 1/							
Total	177	25	46	33	29	22	23
Percent	100	14	26	19	16	12	13
1	56	14	28	10	4	-	-
2	73	9	10	16	18	14	6
3	27	2	4	3	6	6	6
4	13	-	3	2	1	1	6
5	7	-	1	2	-	-	4
6	2	-	-	-	-	1	1

1/ Unweighted totals.

Perquisites.--As these workers were housed in a Government camp which provided cooking facilities, their employers did not supply housing or meals to the workers. A few supplied transportation to and from work. Six workers at Yuba City Camp reported receiving transportation to field jobs, 7 at Westley, 1 at Thornton, and 10 at Winters. Nineteen canning plant workers at the Westley camp reported that transportation was supplied to them. Whether employers supply transportation depends on several factors: (1) the distance of the farm from the place where the workers are housed; (2) keenness of competition for the local labor supply; (3) local customs, including policies of gasoline rationing boards; and (4) the proportion of workers who have suitable transportation of their own.

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